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### **Clinical Assessment**

April 22, 2008

Tyson Mc Clusky B/D 11/21/89

Costanza "Stanzi" Mc Clusky B/D 7/25/91

Elias "Eli" Mc Clusky B/D 2/14/96

**Referral:** The McClusky children were referred to me for an clinical assessment by Mr. Michael Burke in preparation for a sentencing hearing of their father Tarquin McClusky, scheduled for early May, 2008. The aim was to determine what that psychological impact their father's arrest and incarceration had had on them to date and how further imprisonment might impact them in the future.

#### **Eli Mc Clusky, age 12**

**Background Information:** I originally met the McClusky's in 2004 when Eli, then age 8 and in third grade was referred by his teacher for depression. Though Eli was bright, warm, well-liked and functioning at grade level, he was frequently sad, disliked and avoided school whenever possible and spent much of his time absorbed in solitary activities like reading, LEGOS and computer games. He was most comfortable at home enjoying with his father a love of all things Disney, computer games and reading. Eli was a boy of few words. His seeming avoidance of social conversation seemed related to a mild speech problem, extreme shyness and an underlying clinical depression. A familial history of depression suggested a predisposition to a mild Affective Disorder. Because of his age and age appropriate functioning, medication was not considered at that time. Instead I saw Eli for individual counseling over the winter of 2004 /2005 to help him develop strategies to cope with his feelings, help him become more comfortable with self expression, and monitor his depression. Eli 's mood did improve and when the school year ended, his parents, Eli and I concurred that counseling did not seem necessary. He was attending school without complaint, seemed slightly more spontaneous and was seeking out other kids his age to play with.

Currently Eli is enrolled in sixth grade in a neighborhood junior high school where he continues to maintain average grades. He continues to dislike school but feels more at home here because he changes teachers and gets to move around. He is more clinically depressed then when I saw him four

years ago. Eli continues to read but without the pleasure he previously enjoyed. He feels lonely, different from other kids and only content when he is sleeping. He is upset that his father may go away leaving him even more isolated. Though he knows his siblings and his mother care for him, he does not feel connected to them like he does to his father. At the same time he is clear in saying he believes his depression predates his father's legal problems. "Now they are just worse." Though there was no suicidal ideation, I was concerned enough about the depth of his depression to recommend a psychiatric consultation to consider medication. Eli said he would be willing to take medicine if it would help him feel better. Ms Mc Clusky agreed to follow up immediately.

Costanza "Stanzi", age 17

Stanzi is a Junior at Roosevelt High School. She is usually an above average student but notes difficulty concentrating and a slight drop in her grades following the arrest of her father. To date Stanzi has not felt severe negative repercussions to her day to day life. In part her parents have shielded her and in part she protects herself emotionally through denial. For example, she notes it was hard when Dad was away for those months but is confident that if he goes away he won't be gone long. She has proceeded to plan for her summer and college as if there will be no financial impact. So far Stanzi has not realized the family would not be able to finance her return to sleep away camp this summer or her desire to live and attend a private Christian college in New York City if her father goes away. Most of her friends have no idea of the stresses in her home life. Stanzi has tried to proceed with her life and friends as if nothing were different and avoids friends when she feels sad lest they suspect something. Stanzi does currently present and function like a normal adolescent girl who is focused on her own immediate world. This will change if her father's problems impose upon her life more forcefully. She is an intelligent and emotionally young teen whose protected life will unravel if her father has to be away for a lengthy period.

Tyson age 18

Tyson is a Senior at Roosevelt High School. He will graduate in June but has made no definite plans beyond that because he feels his life is on hold until he knows what will happen to his father. Tyson had dreamed about going to the CIA to become a chef but now he is not sure what will happen. He feels guilty and sad that his relationship with his father has changed since his father's arrest and forced separation from the family. He recalls fondly their shared passion for Monty Python, music and Star Wars. While his dad was away he felt he was forced to grow up quick, to rely on himself more and to look after his Mom. Even though his father is back he still feels a distance and a continued loss. He also worries for his Mom and younger brother. He sees how hard his mom works and though he tries to help he feels limited in making things better for her. He does feel good that his relationship with his younger brother has deepened. But here too, he feels at a loss to know how to fix things for his younger brother.

Tyson does have a girlfriend, close friends and hobbies. He loves computers and has considered studying programming if his chef dream is impossible. For the present he knows he will have to get his license and a job for the summer. His plans for his own future are on hold until he knows what will happen to his father and family.

Summary

All three children have been struggling since their father's arrest in December, 2006. They enjoyed an unusually close bond to each other often choosing to spend their free time with each other rather than outside the family. Also the family is committed and involved in their church. Since December, 2006, the family has had to function differently. Dad was away and then unable to join the family on outings. Mom has been forced to compensate the loss of income. The kids have had to fend more for themselves. All feel their lives are on hold. In spite of the stresses, they are managing to function though at a price. Eli is most in pain and at risk but his Mom is pursuing psychiatric help for him. There is no question that the children would be able to proceed more effectively if their father could be more physically present to emotionally and financially support their efforts to get on with their lives. In spite of his failings, mistakes and problems, Mr. Mc Clusky has always been there for his kids. I hope that they will not be punished for his mistakes.